



Griffin Report

of Food Marketing

All That's News in the Food Industry

www.griffinreport.com

February 2012 • Volume 46 No. 02

Take A Lunch Break...

BY MARIE PEELER

There's a saying that comes from the African Plains: "Every morning in Africa, a gazelle wakes up. It knows it must run faster than the fastest lion, or it will be killed. Every morning a lion wakes up. It knows it must outrun the slowest gazelle, or it will starve to death. It doesn't matter whether you are a lion or a gazelle...when the sun comes up, you'd better be running."

In the fast-paced environment in which restaurateurs operate on a daily basis, it's easy to fall into the trap of thinking that the only way to be more effective and more productive is by running faster and harder. In fact, typically the working atmosphere of a restaurant is filled with people who are running as fast as they can, and working as hard as they can, and yet at the end of the day they are feeling frustrated and unfulfilled.

Leaders in the restaurant industry can feel particularly challenged. In addition to the

lightning-speed pace at which they need to determine, direct, and decide various business issues of the operation, they typically don't have a steadfast "rule book" upon which to rely. And historically, leaders in this industry receive very little leadership development.

As a result, it's easy for restaurateurs to fall on reactive tendencies, especially during times of stress when, ironically, they need to be their most creative and resourceful. Reactive tendencies might be manifested in compliance, perfectionism, arrogance, or excessive drive. These tendencies, which are driven from deep within restaurant leaders by their beliefs and assumptions, sabotage relationships, create imbalance, obstruct achievement, and generally thwart leadership greatness.

Perhaps the best thing for restaurateurs to do is an act that may seem counterintuitive to many — take a break. Specifically, they should take time for themselves — a creative pause that directs them to focus internally rather than externally, on

being rather than doing, and allows them to ask, "What is it about me and my leadership that could get better results?"

Doing this will allow restaurant leaders to determine and develop their creative competencies, such as relating well with other people, creating collaborative teams, developing self-awareness, being strategically focused, achieving sustainable productivity, and acquiring a sense of systems awareness — i.e., knowing how all the pieces fit together and understanding how an act today might affect the business six months from now.

(Marie Peeler is a principal of Peeler Associates, a Pembroke, Mass.-based organization that helps leaders clarify objectives, improve interpersonal effectiveness, and attain their goals through services that include executive coaching, team development, custom workshops and seminars, leadership assessment, business retreats, and keynote, conference and meeting presentations. For more information, visit www.peelerassociates.com.)